WALKABILITY SURVEY RESULTS REPORT

- COLLEGE PARK -

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INTRODUCTION

This report details the results of the walkability survey implemented in College Park during the months of May-June 2003. First, the background of the project is discussed. Next, the community is described, and the response rates detailed. This is followed by results of the survey and by concluding remarks.

BACKGROUND

A Smart Step Forward is a statewide campaign in Maryland to increase walking and the development of walkable communities. By encouraging more physical activity, A Smart Step Forward seeks to address serious public health concerns such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma and obesity. A Smart Step Forward campaign strives to produce better environments for walking through changes to land use codes, implementation of demonstration projects, and community support for physical changes that produce a friendly pedestrian environment.

This project was launched in 2001 by the Governor's Office of Smart Growth and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In 2002, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded a $150,000 two-year grant to the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland to create pilot projects in three Maryland communities. The Smart Step Forward project has identified the communities of Bel Air in Harford County, College Park in Prince George's County, and Turner Station in Baltimore County, that will serve as demonstration projects. The project will include community surveys, audits of local zoning and subdivision codes, public workshops and implementation projects.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

College Park, located in Prince George's County, is the home of the University of Maryland. Traditionally a college town with more than 54.4 percent of its population enrolled in higher education (*calculated from the 2000 Census SF3 files*), College Park has a large population of pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as two major transit stations. A very large percentage of College Park residents walk, bicycle or ride public transportation to work, as in most college towns. Similarly, the University is clearly instrumental in contributing to the diverse ethnic distribution. However, the city currently lacks adequate sidewalks in many areas and pedestrian connectivity to campus is rather poor.

RESPONSE RATES/SAMPLING DISTRIBUTION

The survey instrument is shown in Appendix A. Surveys were administered in all neighborhoods, including the university campus, in the community and an attempt was made to survey at every third residential location (for dormitories, every third room/suite was surveyed). This survey was completed by 271 residents of College Park. The response rate during administration of the survey was 36.6%.

The characteristics of the survey respondents were consistent with the age and sex distributions of the College Park population as reported in the 2000 census. One hundred and forty three respondents (53%) reported being affiliated with the University of Maryland.

Age

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	12 to 15	2	0.7
	16 to 24	143	52.8
	25 to 34	31	11.4
	35 to 44	25	9.2
	45 to 54	22	8.1
	55 to 64	12	4.4
	65 or over	29	10.7
	Total	264	97.4
Missing	9	7	2.6
Total		271	100.0

Sex

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	126	46.5
	Female	129	47.6
	Total	255	94.1
Missing	9	16	5.9
Total		271	100.0

RESULTS

The results of the survey are briefly reported in this section. Detailed results for each question in the survey are shown in Appendix B.

Ninety two percent of the survey respondents of driving age reported having a driver's license but only 76% stated having a car in their household. This is probably due to the fact that many College Park residents are University students and therefore might not have a car on campus.

Travel by car is the primary mode of transportation for most residents of College Park (60%); however, many residents walk (30%) which again reflects the influence of the University. Transit (5%), riding in a car as a passenger (3%) and bicycling (2%) are not as strongly represented.

Most respondents engage in some walking on a daily basis. The large majority of respondents (84%) reported walking more than ten minutes per day, on average. Of these, nearly 34% spend twenty to sixty minutes engaged in walking activity and 33% walk for more than one hour daily. Four percent do not walk at all.

On an average day, most respondents - nearly 45% - reported walking more than one mile and another 20% walk between one-half and one mile. Seventeen percent walk between one-quarter and one-half mile, and 18% walk less than one-quarter mile each day. There are minor disparities between the reported time spent walking and the distances: while only 4% of College Park residents reported walking less than 10 minutes on an average day, nearly 18% reported walking less than one-quarter mile. One possible explanation is that people rarely are aware of how far they walk, and perhaps have trouble estimating and reporting those distances.

Most respondents (27%) walk for at least ten continuous minutes for five days a week. This suggests that many respondents' walking behavior may be related to their work or school week. Nearly 27% report walking for at least 10 minutes every day of the week. These might be primarily students who walk as their primary mode of transportation. But nearly 17% of the respondents infrequently walk for this duration (3 days per week or less).

An overwhelming number of respondents (90%) in College Park reported walking around their home. Many also walked around work/school (39%) and at the gym (30%).
The presence of young children in the household and pet ownership have been identified in previous research as factors that affect the amount of walking behavior. In College Park, there was a low percentage of children under five in the household (6%) but a high percentage of pet ownership (21%).

Changes in seasons and the corresponding weather variations also affect the amount of walking. Many respondents from College Park reported reducing their walking (46%), stopping altogether (7%), walking indoors (7%) or changing exercise type (2%) because of seasonal change. However, the weather did not affect the walking behavior of a large portion of the population (42%). As with the seasons, the amount of daylight often affects the amount of walking and people may be hesitant to walk at nighttime. In College Park, most respondents reported sometimes walking at night (73%).

The ability to walk as a means of transportation is affected by the distribution of destinations in an urban area. More than half of College Park residents reported being able to walk to work/school (53%) and all of the people who reported being able to walk to work/school also reported doing so. Again, this is almost certainly due to the University and the fact that many respondents of the survey were students (53% of respondents reported being affiliated with the University).

Residents were asked about the destinations to which they frequently walk. A very large percentage of residents (48%) reported walking to school. This is consistent with the

primarily university-affiliated residents of College Park. Other common destinations include neighbor's (45%), car/parking lot (40%), for pleasure/no destination (33%), and store (33%).

Residents of College Park reported walking primarily for health reasons (51%). However, many also reported walking because it was most convenient (47%) and/or that walking was their primary mode of transportation (37%). Most respondents reported walking alone (63%) and with friends or family (35%).

The survey questioned respondents about their opinions about various aspects of the pedestrian environment in their neighborhood. Respondents felt strongly that neighbors frequently were walking and visible, that there are sufficient trees in their neighborhood, and that their neighborhood is enjoyable to walk in. They also felt strongly that there were not enough pedestrian facilities and amenities. The lack of benches or places to sit, sidewalk quantity and maintenance of sidewalks, especially in the winter were among the negative rankings. Overall, most residents reported that walking was easy in their neighborhood, with an average rating of a 4.03 (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being very difficult for walking and 5 representing the other extreme of very easy).

Survey respondents were also asked about factors that discourage or prevent them from walking more. The most commonly cited factor was lack of time with 44% reporting. Other factors that discourage walking in College Park were "not thinking about it" (37%), extreme weather (23%) and feeling unsafe (16%).

In a similar vein, respondents were asked what improvements would make the most difference in increasing their pedestrian activity. Infrastructure treatments were the most popular responses as residents requested more sidewalks (35%). This was followed by safety concerns: 27% reported wanting better lighting and another 27% reported that better police enforcement would encourage them to walk more. Several (32%) felt that nothing could be done to improve upon their current level of walking.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this community walking survey identify several points for further discussion and suggest several directions for future improvement. Residents of College Park have slightly lower rates of car ownership and drivers licensure than the US population. These levels of car ownership most likely reflect the student-oriented nature of the city. The majority predominately gets around as drivers of private automobiles but large numbers identified walking as their primary mode and participants exhibited a high level of walking behavior. These high numbers dependent upon walking for their mobility point to the need for evaluation of and investment in the pedestrian environment in this neighborhood.

The fact that most engage in walking at or near their home reinforces this point. Residents of College Park appear to be highly active from the levels of walking and use of gym facilities. All who could walk to work, indeed do commute to work by walking.

More could be done to accommodate walking, both from an infrastructure and a safety standpoint. This higher level of walking connected with transportation and convenience is probably due to several reasons. As mentioned before, the community is a college town and many attend school and work activities at the University of Maryland. Also, there are several retail and business establishments and employment opportunities within walking distance of many living on or near campus. For these reasons, improvements to pedestrian infrastructure such as adding lighting, police enforcement or presence, and building and maintaining sidewalks could increase the amount of walking currently done by residents and the safety of those that currently do. It is somewhat surprising, however, that residents did not express stronger feelings about driver behavior and the number of crosswalks given the high level of automobile traffic in the area.

The community seems to be strongly motivated to walk for health reasons. This is evident by the high numbers walking for exercise and reinforced by their use of gym facilities. But encouraging more walking activity cannot be left to improvements in the physical environment. Many personal reasons were cited for not walking such as lack of time or not considering walking as an option. These constraints are more difficult to address through policy and the degree of success of any program will be moderated by these types of considerations.

APPENDIX A: Walkability Survey

WALKABILITY SURVEY

1. How much time do you generally spend walking each day?
☐ Not at all
☐ Less than 10 minutes
☐ 11-20 minutes
☐ 21-60 minutes
☐ More than one hour daily

2. How far do you generally walk each day?
☐ Less than 1/4 mile ☐ 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile
☐ 1/2 mile to 1 mile ☐ More than 1 mile

3. How many days per week do you walk at least 10 continuous minutes?
☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3
☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

4. In what areas do you walk?
(check all that apply, star most frequent)
☐ Near home ☐ Near work/school
☐ At the mall ☐ At the gym
☐ Walking trails ☐ Other _____

5. How do the different seasons affect your walking?
☐ No change
☐ Reduce amount/frequency
☐ Walk indoors
☐ Change exercise type
☐ Stop walking
☐ Other_____

6. Do you sometimes walk at night?
☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Can you walk to work/school?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, do you?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not?
_____
_____
_____

8. When you go out walking, where do you walk to?
(check all that apply, star most frequent)
☐ Work ☐ School ☐ Church
☐ Park ☐ Bus stop ☐ Library
☐ Neighbor's ☐ Post Office ☐ Store
☐ No destination/For pleasure
☐ Parking lot/car
☐ Other_____

9. Why do you walk?
(check all that apply, star most important to you)
☐ Exercise/Health ☐ Relax
☐ Enjoy nature ☐ Accompany family/friend
☐ Pet ☐ Most convenient
☐ Primary means of transport
☐ Cheapest way to get around
☐ Other_____

10. Do you generally walk…
☐ Alone ☐ With a pet
☐ With friends and/or family
☐ With an organized group

Please use this scale for the following question:
1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Agree – Agree – Neutral – Disagree – Strongly Disagree

11. In your neighborhood… (please circle one)

Drivers drive at safe speeds. 1 2 3 4 5

Drivers usually respect/yield to pedestrians. 1 2 3 4 5

There are sufficient traffic signals or signs and well marked crosswalks 1 2 3 4 5

Traffic signals allow enough time to cross the street. 1 2 3 4 5

There are enough curb cuts. 1 2 3 4 5

There is sufficient street lighting. 1 2 3 4 5

I feel safe walking in my neighborhood. 1 2 3 4 5

Dogs are kept on a leash. 1 2 3 4 5

There are enough sidewalks. 1 2 3 4 5

Sidewalks are in good condition. 1 2 3 4 5

Sidewalks are clear of litter, leaves, poles, and other obstacles. 1 2 3 4 5

During the winter, sidewalks are kept clear of snow. 1 2 3 4 5

There are benches and/or places to sit. 1 2 3 4 5

There are trees and/or other attractive features along the street. 1 2 3 4 5

There are walking trails 1 2 3 4 5

My neighborhood is attractive and enjoyable to walk in. 1 2 3 4 5

There are commercial areas within walking distance of my residence. 1 2 3 4 5

I often see people walking and biking in my neighborhood. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Overall, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being low and 5 being high, how do you rate how easy it is to walk in your neighborhood?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

13. What keeps you from walking more than you do now? (check all that apply, star the most important to you)

☐ No time/too busy ☐ Don't think about it
☐ Health reasons ☐ Feel unsafe
☐ Extreme weather
☐ Not enough destinations
☐ Get enough exercise elsewhere
☐ Other_____

14. What would be most likely to make you walk more? (check all that apply, star the most important to you)

☐ Better lighting ☐ Better/more sidewalks
☐ Improved signals ☐ Better/more crosswalks
☐ Better police enforcement
☐ Cleaner streets ☐ More trees
☐ More bus stops ☐ More stores
☐ More parks and trails ☐ Nothing
☐ Other_____

15. Finally, we'd like to learn a bit more about you.

Do you:

Have children under 5? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Own a dog? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Do you have a license? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Own a car? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What is your primary mode of transportation?

☐ Car ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walking
☐ Transit ☐ Ride in car (passenger)
☐ Other _____

If you are a student, what school do you attend?

_____

If you are employed, where do you work? (nearest intersection and city)

_____

Are you: ☐ Male ☐ Female

What is your age:

☐ 12 to 15 ☐ 16 to 24 ☐ 25 to 34 ☐ 35 to 44
☐ 45 to 54 ☐ 55 to 64 ☐ 65 or over

What is your address:
[Note: we will not use this to contact you]

_____

_____

Is there anything else you'd like to say about walking in your neighborhood?

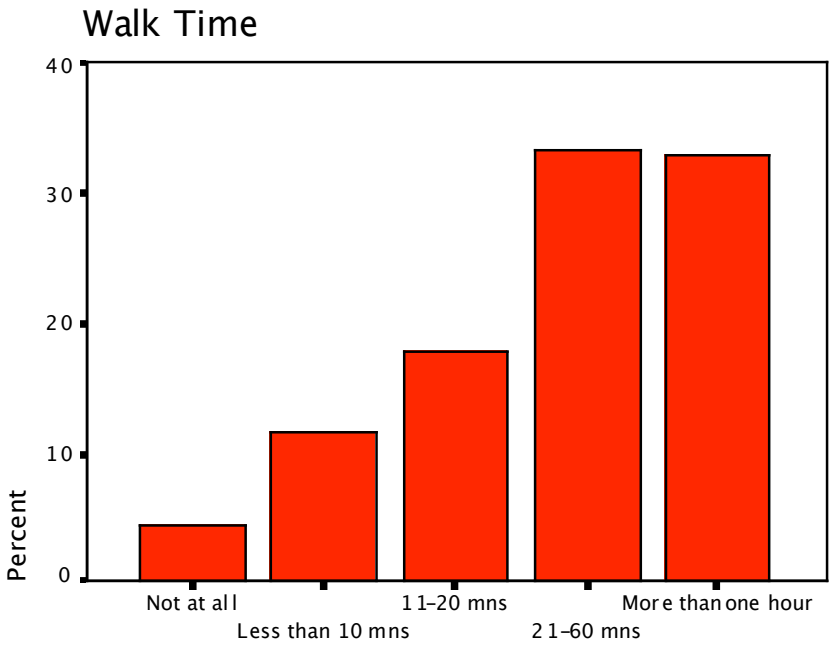
_____

_____

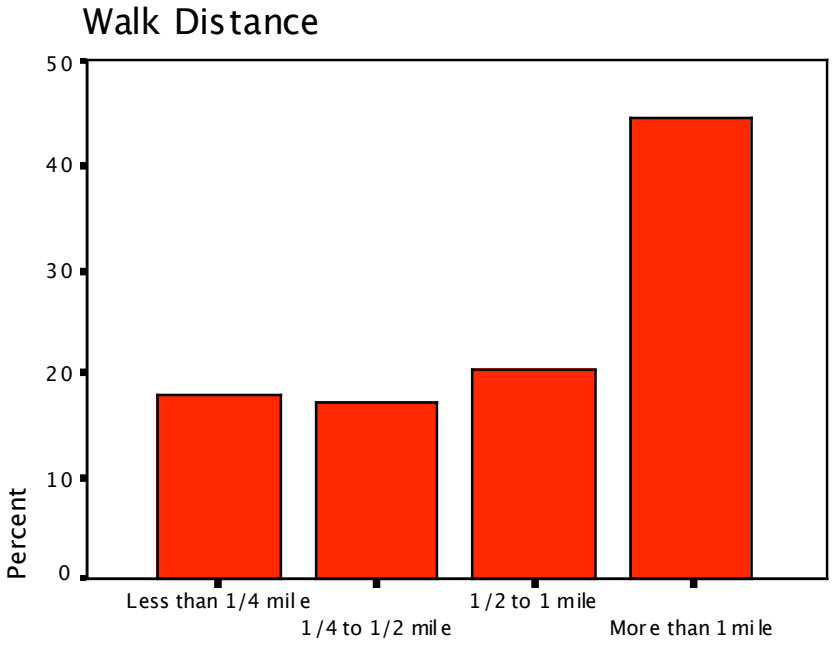
_____

APPENDIX B: Detailed Results of Survey

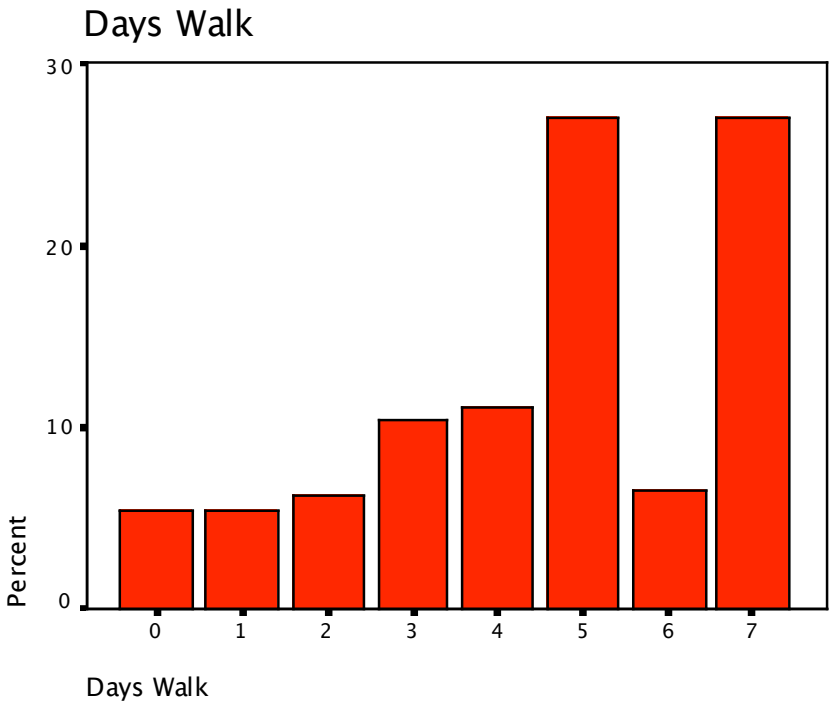
1. **How much time do you generally spend walking each day?**



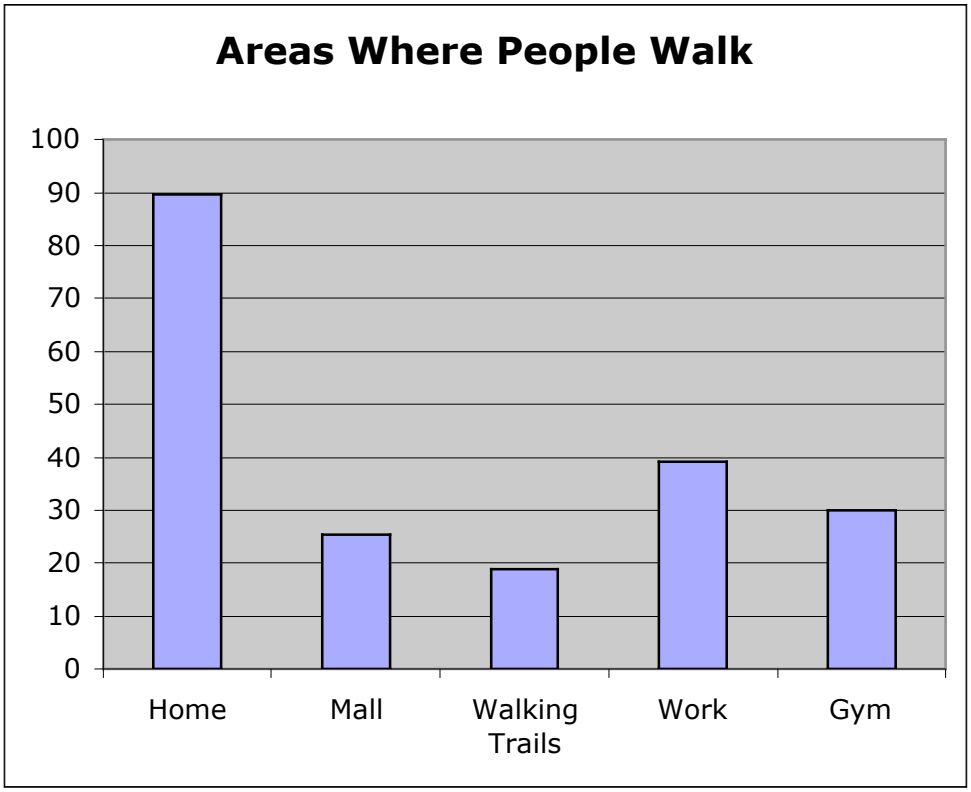
2. **How far do you generally walk each day?**



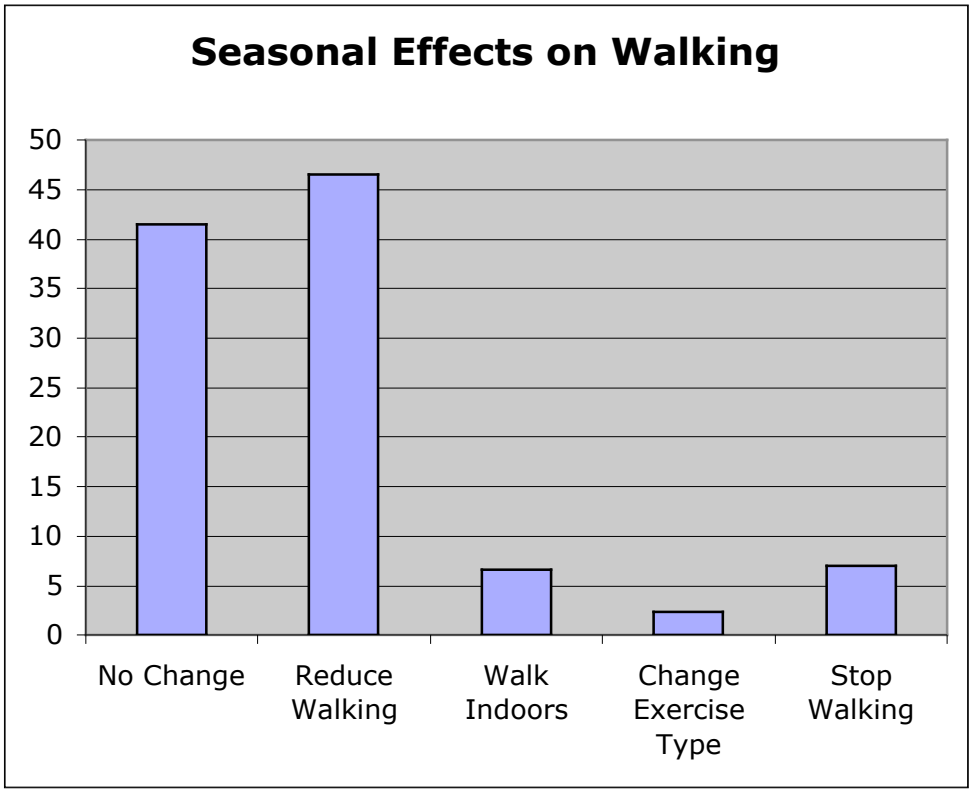
3. How many days per week do you walk at least 10 continuous minutes?



4. In what areas do you walk?



5. How do the different seasons affect your walking?



6. Do you sometimes walk at night?

7. Can you walk to work/school?

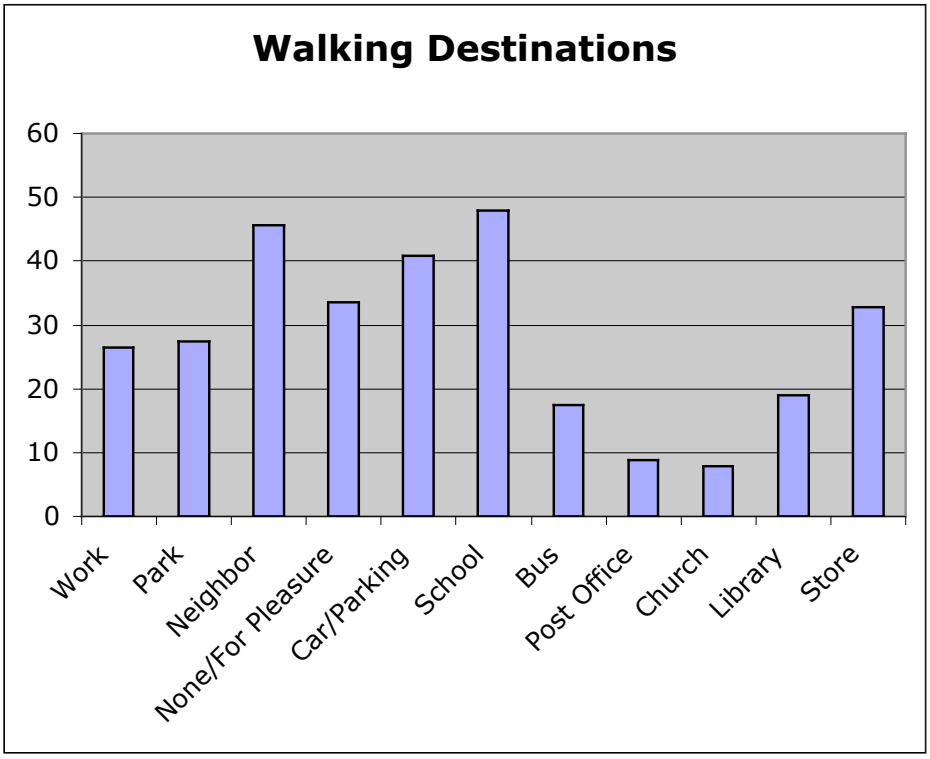
7b. Do you walk to work or school?

Statistics

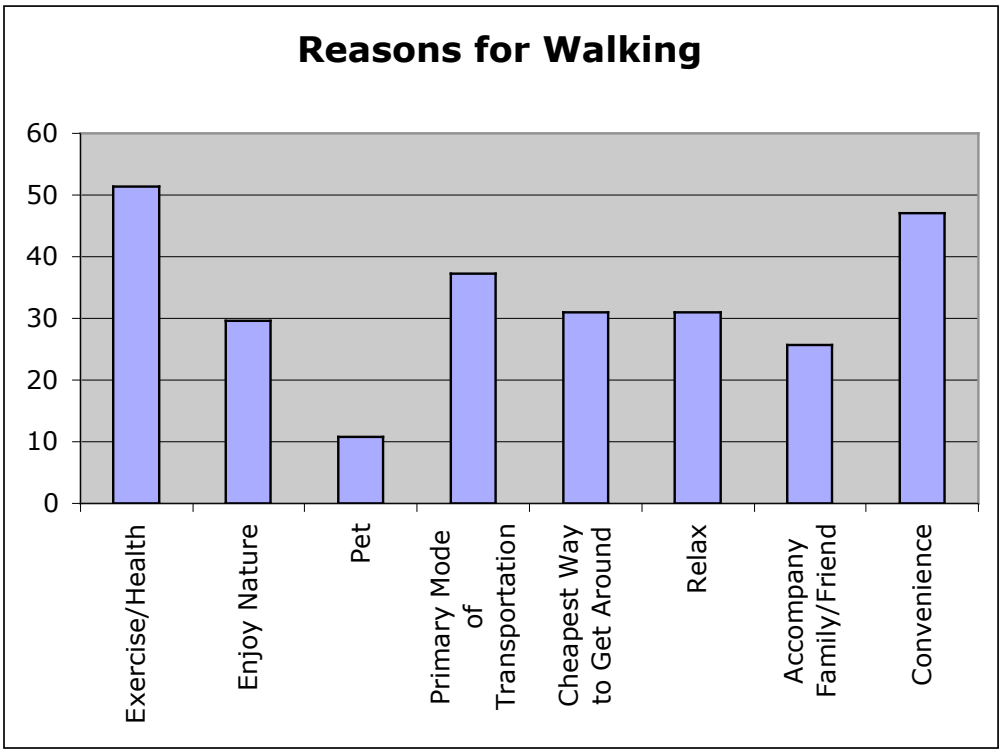
Do Walk Work/School

N	Valid	142
	Missing	129
Mean		1.00

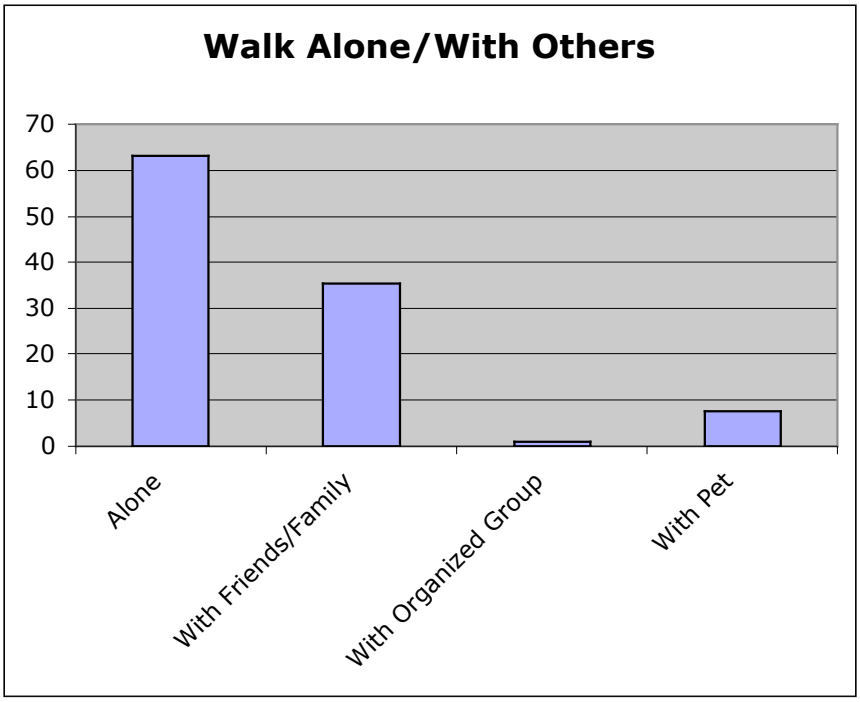
8. When you go out walking, where do you walk to?



9. Why do you walk?



10. Do you generally walk…



11. In your neighborhood…

Scale:

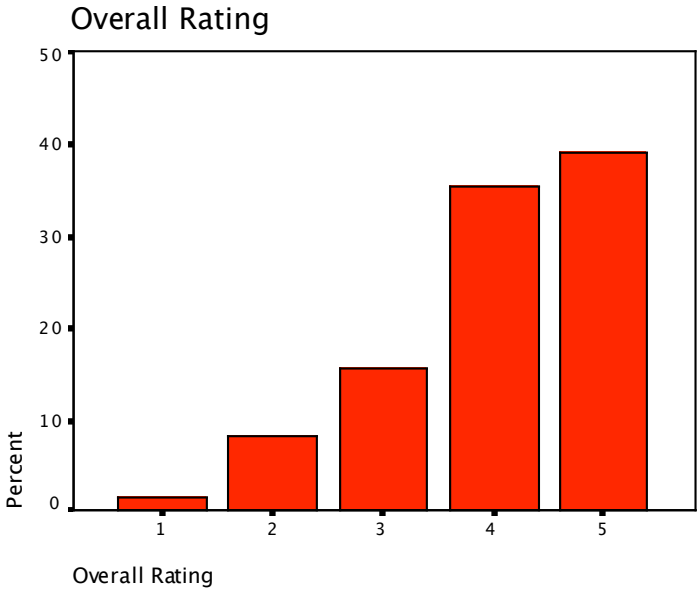
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	– Agree	– Neutral	– Disagree	– Strongly Disagree

Feature	N	Mean
Drivers drive at safe speeds	270	2.91
Driver s usually respect/yield to pedestrians	269	2.39
There are sufficient traffic signals or signs and well marked crosswalks	270	2.32
Traffic signals allow enough time to cross the street	268	2.50
There are enough curb cuts	264	2.52
There is sufficient street lighting	270	2.74
I feel safe walking in my neighborhood	271	2.42
Dogs are kept on a leash	271	2.28
There are enough sidewalks	270	2.97
Sidewalks are in good condition	257	2.77
Sidewalks are clear of litter, leaves, poles and other obstacles	257	2.89
During the winter, sidewalks are kept clear of snow	255	3.24
There are benches and/or places to sit	269	3.39
There are trees and/or other attractive features along the street	271	2.12
There are walking trails	271	2.65
My neighborhood is attractive and enjoyable to walk in	271	2.30
There are commercial areas within walking distance of my residence	269	2.35
I often see people walking and biking in my neighborhood	269	1.86
Valid N (listwise)	248	

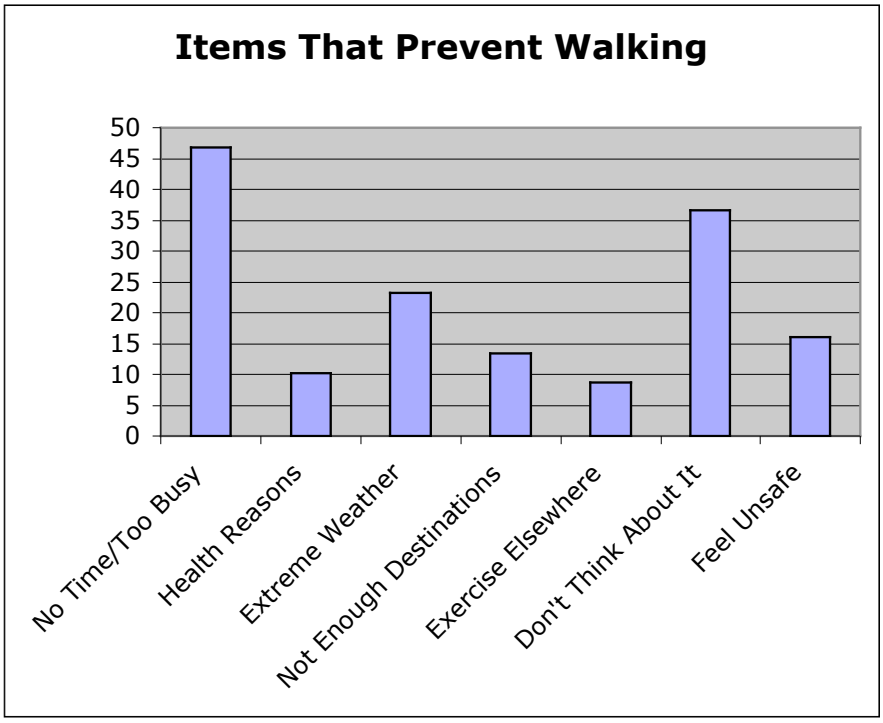
12. Overall, how do you rate how easy it is to walk in your neighborhood?

Scale:

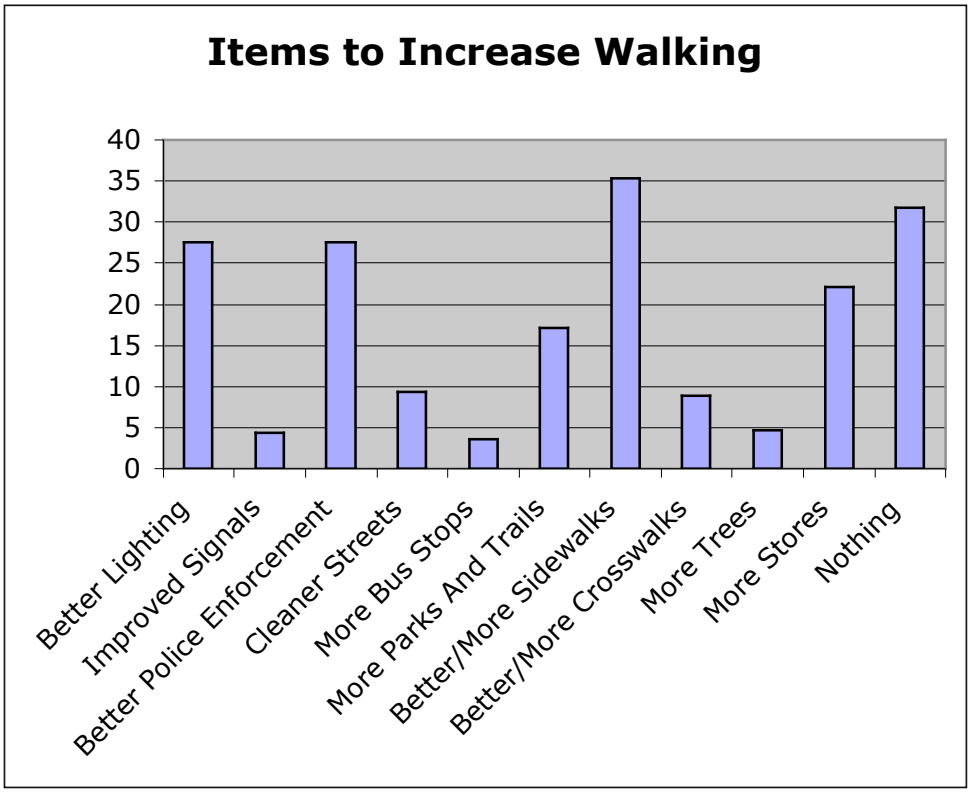
1	2	3	4	5
Very – Difficult	Moderately – Difficult	Neutral –	Moderately – Easy	Very Easy



13. What keeps you from walking more than you do now?



14. What would be most likely to make you walk more?



15b. What is your primary mode of transportation?